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VI. HOPI MARRIAGE RITES ON THE WEDDING
MORNING

BY

H. R. VOTH.

HOPI MARRIAGE RITES ON THE WEDDING MORNING.

As the heading indicates this brief sketch does not intend to describe, even briefly, an entire Hopi marriage ceremony, which includes different preparations, rites, etc., running through several months.¹ It simply gives the proceedings and rites of the morning of the wedding day proper, after which the contracting parties are considered married, subsequent observances and customs (that still form a part of the entire marriage ceremony) notwithstanding.

The author was well acquainted with the young people and all that were present. The wedding took place in Oraibi in the home of the groom's uncle and aunt, his parents having died long before. This aunt was the sister of the village chief, and of the chief priest of the Soyal fraternity, who at the same time was also a member of various other societies. She is probably the most important woman of the village, and I have seen her figure very conspicuously in different secret religious ceremonies, especially in the Soyal and Marau. When her sister, the mother of the groom, died years ago, she adopted all the orphan children, I think seven in number, and was to them a real mother. She had no children of her own. Her husband is also one of the prominent men of the village and of the Soyal society.

The marriage took place on March 1, 1904, and the following persons were present:

Taláskwaptiwa, Tawa (Sun) clan, stepfather of the groom.

Pungnyánōmsi, Honawu (Bear) clan, stepmother of the groom.

Sívánka, Ishawuu (Coyote) clan, mother of the bride.

Nakwámōsi, Ishawuu (Coyote) clan, grandmother of bride on mother's side.

Sákwmōsi, Ishawuu (Coyote) clan.

Báyamka, Ishawuu (Coyote) clan.

Nuvávánka, Ishawuu (Coyote) clan.

Kiwánhoynōm, Ishawuu (Coyote) clan.

Mōsínōmka, Tuwa (Sand) clan.

Nasíngyaonōm, Honani (Badger) clan, grandmother of bride on father's side.

Honánmana, Ishawuu (Bear) clan.

¹See the author's "Oraibi Marriage Customs," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. II, April-June, 1900.

Kiwánhongka, Ishawuu (Bear) clan, opened bride's hair.

Mótooma, Ishawuu (Bear) clan, groom.

Tobángyamsi, Ishawuu (Coyote) clan, bride.

We proceeded to the house at four A. M. The mother and the grandmother of the bride (the latter on the mother's side) just arrived. The inhabitants of the house were still abed, but all said that they had been waiting for us. The bride slept at the home of the parents (step-parents in this case) of her future husband, where she had been taken by her mother three days previously, and had ground corn during that time. Pungnyanömsi, the groom's aunt (mother) at once got some sticks of wood from outside and built a fire in the fire-place in one of the corners of the room, another fire having already been built in the stove. Both mothers then took their places near the fire-place where they commenced to make suds in two large bowls of yucca plant roots that were first mashed by stones, Nasingyaonöm and the sister of Pungnyanömsi taking a place beside them. Several of the women were sitting on the west wall, near the stove. While the two women were preparing the suds, Kiwanhongka opened the bride's hair. At about half past four Motooma came in. The couple then knelt on a pelt before the two bowls, the bride before the bowl of her future mother-in-law, and the groom before that of his future mother-in-law. The two women then commenced to wash the heads of the couple, but in this all the women participated. Usually the hair of the young couple is then washed thoroughly together in each bowl, and this hair washing, and especially the washing of the two heads in the same bowl, is said to be the "crucial moment" in which the two are supposed to "become one." In this case, as also in others where the groom's hair had been cut, this mutual washing was dispensed with, which caused some remarks, teasing and laughter, and the suggestion whether he could really be considered as having been married. After they were through, another woman came in and the bridegroom had to come forward and submit to another washing. He was in his usual working clothes and the bride was robed in an atöe (white ceremonial blanket with red and blue border).

When they were through the young man seated himself on the west side of the room quite a little distance from the stove, while the bride seated herself behind and close to the stove. Pungnyanömsi got a bowl into which the suds were poured and carried it out later on. There were present in all about eleven women, the husband of Pungnyanömsi being the only man present. The father of the bride usually does not come until later.

After the bowls had been emptied and fresh water poured into them

Pungnyanömsi took off the atöe of the bride and invited her to come to the bowl again, where the upper part of her body was bathed, the bride washing her arms herself. The bridegroom somewhat protested saying the water was too cold. He seemed to be at first embarrassed to take off his shirt, and so the women suggested that he go outside and take a bath there, which I have also observed in other cases. Several women again assisted in the bathing of the bride, also washing her feet after they had bathed the upper part of her body and her arms. It took quite a while before the young man could make up his mind to submit to the bathing. He protested, saying that the water was too cold, he had taken a bath the previous evening, etc.; but finally, after being encouraged on all sides, he cast off his shirt, knelt down at his bowl, then all the women participated in rubbing his body thoroughly. The delay was accompanied by a good deal of joking and hilarity on the part of the women. While he was being bathed his bride was again sitting behind the stove drying her hair. The second addition of the water was again poured into the tin pail.

As soon as the bathing was over all the women left except the mother of the bride and Kuktiwa's wife. At about five o'clock, as soon as the hair of the young people was somewhat dry, Pungnyanömsi handed them a pinch of corn-meal, whereupon they went outside and sprinkled the corn-meal towards the dawn that was appearing in the east. They did this standing on the edge of the house, instead of going to the edge of the mesa as is usually the case. When they came in Pungnyanömsi put some meal into a bowl which the young bride commenced to knead. When she was through she made piki of this dough, and then assisted in the preparing of the morning meal which is really the wedding feast and for which other friends and relatives, also the bride's father came in.

After this feast cotton was distributed to the friends and relatives of the young couple as usual, who then prepare, during the following six to eight weeks, the bridal costume which is used in another part of the general marriage ceremony.